

Huge turnout for Wisconsin May Day 100,000 demand rights for immigrants & unions

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Milwaukee

In one of the biggest marches and rallies in Wisconsin history, more than 100,000 people participated in this year's May Day in Milwaukee.

The action was sponsored by the immigrant rights organization Voces de la Frontera and endorsed by the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO and numerous other labor, community and youth organizations. Participants' demands included legalization now; no Arizona racist copycat legislation in Wisconsin; keep in-state tuition for immigrant students; and no union busting in Wisconsin or anywhere in the United States.

The march began on the south side of Milwaukee at Voces de la Frontera's offices. It included whole families along with labor, community and youth delegations that carried colorful banners such as "People before banks, Stop union busting; Jobs, not racism, Legalization, not anti-immigrant laws" and chanted slogans such as "Sí se puede!"

Labor delegations included the Service Employees union, the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. Members of many unions attended, including the International

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WW EDITORIAL

The killing of Osama bin Laden Why they wanted him dead, not alive

Why? Why did the U.S. government do it this way? Since the beginning of organized deadly warfare, when one side finally wins by capturing the leader of the other side, it has been the custom for the victor to display the captive for everyone to see.

After the huge inter-imperialist wars fought over the past century, in which tens of millions were killed or died of disease and starvation, the winners went further than that. They put the losers on trial so that the public could hear about all their crimes and be convinced that the devastation of war was justified and the more honorable side had won.

The very name of the city where this last took place, Nuremberg, has become synonymous with bringing to justice at least some of those guilty of war crimes.

So why were U.S. Navy SEALs, trained assassins, sent to kill Osama bin Laden? Why didn't the U.S. government want him

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May Day marchers in New York City stream into Foley Square. See page 5.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

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Intersection of race & class

Tornadoes rip through South

By Larry Hales

The tornado outbreaks in the southern midwest and southeast states of the U.S. between April 25 and April 27 were unusually fierce and deadly. At least 339 people — and possibly more than 400 — have died. Thousands were injured by the storms and hundreds are missing. Many are homeless as whole areas were razed and completely devastated.

There are reports of over 425 tornadoes occurring over a four-day period, 259 of them on April 27, with 16 states reporting funnel clouds. This is the third deadliest tornado outbreak in the country since the Tristate outbreak of 1925 and the Tupelo-Gainesville outbreak of 1936.

A debate is going on now about the relation of the fierce and prolific tornadoes to climate change. The right-wing suggests that the effects of a warming earth due to pollution and other human causes cannot be as bad as once thought. Such a position is full of fallacies and is blatantly ridiculous, especially given all the evidence of how climate change affects earthquakes.

The storms have no prejudice. However, in the U.S., the dry line — the point at which a tornado forms where different air currents meet — is at the intersection of race and class. The most vulnerable are the poor and dispossessed of the working class, which because of the history of the U.S. are disproportionately oppressed nationalities. Whether oppressed nationalities or not, poor working people will be saddled with the effects of the tornado outbreak for a long time to come.

While President Barack Obama visited Tuscaloosa, Ala., the hardest-hit city, eager not to repeat the criminally negligent, slow response of the federal government after hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the reality is that a capitalist society is fundamentally ill prepared to give the type of response necessary during times of devastating storms.

While the U.S. is materially prepared, the priorities of capitalism and imperialism and the organization of society are such that many will be left behind.

Intersection of social storms

For instance, according to a study done in 2008 by Northern Illinois University meteorologist Walker Ashley, the area with the most tornado fatalities is southeastern U.S. This is partly because, according to Ashley, "Mobile homes make up 30 to 40 percent of the housing stock in some counties in the deep South." Ashley believes that 50 percent of deaths from tornadoes are people who live in mobile homes. (New York Times, April 29)

Alabama suffered more than 200 deaths. Tuscaloosa accounted for 70 or more, with the city faring the worse with widespread damage and death.

More than half of Mississippi counties were affected, as well as parts of Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas and Georgia, along with reports of tornadoes as far west as Texas and as far north as New York.

Many parts of the South that suffered are some of the poorest in the country. Mississippi is the poorest state with the lowest per capita income; Arkansas ranks second, Alabama eighth, Tennessee fourth and North Carolina ninth, according to a CNN report from September.

In Mississippi 22 percent of people are listed as impoverished. All the states listed above, with the exception of Virginia and New York, have poverty rates at 16 percent or higher. The poverty rate in New York state is about 13 percent.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics illuminates even more the economic degradation of the areas in the storm's path. Mississippi has an unemployment rate of 10.2 percent, North Carolina 9.7 percent, Tennessee 9.5 percent, Alabama 9.2 percent, and Arkansas 7.8 percent. These are official unemployment rates, measured by those who filed for unemployment and not taking into account the many who have dropped out of the labor market altogether. These numbers do not reflect the devastating unemployment in Black and Indigenous communities, which face the highest unemployment rates in the country.

People without homes, insurance, jobs or who live on the brink — teetering just above the threshold that separates official poverty from being not so poor — will be left to figure out how to get on with their lives at the mercy of the free market for jobs, a place to live and every necessity of life.

The states will give a bare minimum of relief for a short time. But many of the areas hit, locally and at the state level, have instituted cutbacks. Forty-four states have projected deficits for fiscal year 2011-2012 and proposed cutbacks will dig deep into the social wage.

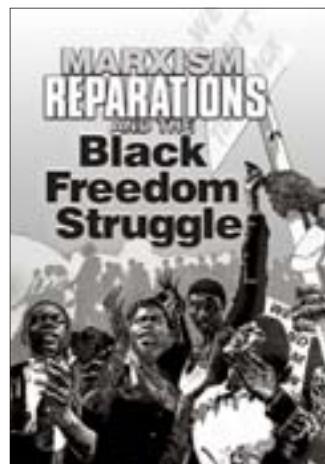
Workers, the oppressed, the unemployed and youth are left to fend for themselves under the conditions of capitalism. The capitalist state is not organized to provide for people's needs. This has become more evident now, as austerity is being enforced at all levels.

It is important to fight against all cutbacks, for more resources, and ultimately for the type of society that will be organized to provide for the needs of all workers and the oppressed instead of profits for the capitalists. □

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Appeals court upholds new sentencing hearing for Mumia Abu-Jamal

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

On April 26 the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia unanimously issued a ruling upholding its earlier decision calling for a new sentencing hearing for Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was convicted of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner in 1982. On Pennsylvania's death row for almost 29 years, Abu-Jamal — a world-renowned political prisoner and former Black Panther Party member — has consistently maintained his innocence.

This latest finding upholds a 2008 ruling by this same court supporting U.S. District Judge William H. Yohn Jr., who in 2001 set aside Abu-Jamal's death penalty sentence after determining that instructions given to the jury and a jury ballot document used during Abu-Jamal's 1982 trial were confusing and misleading. In 2010 the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the Third Circuit to re-examine its earlier ruling in light of the

higher court's rejection of a similar claim in an Ohio death-penalty case.

While likely to be challenged, the Third Circuit's latest ruling requires Philadelphia prosecutors to call for a new sentencing hearing if they want to push to reinstate the death penalty.

It's unlikely that Philadelphia's current District Attorney, Seth Williams, will allow this to happen since it would require impaneling a new jury that could consider new evidence regarding mitigating and aggravating circumstances in the case. While the issue of guilt or innocence would not be on trial, the defense could bring in witnesses whose testimony could raise questions about the validity of the conviction.

Prosecutors could also decide not to hold a new hearing and convert Abu-Jamal's death sentence automatically to a life sentence. In Pennsylvania this means no chance of parole. However, Williams has already indicated that he will appeal the Third Circuit Court's ruling back to

the U.S. Supreme Court. In the meantime, Abu-Jamal remains on death row as he has since Yohn's 2001 ruling.

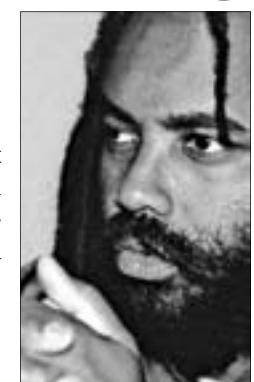
Abu-Jamal's lead attorney, Widener University law professor Judith Ritter, who represented Abu-Jamal during the appeal process that led to the Third Circuit Court's most recent ruling, stated that the Third Circuit decision reinforced rulings that "found his death sentence to be unconstitutional."

"The Third Circuit's most recent opinion reflects a detailed analysis demonstrating that their unanimous decision is well-supported by Supreme Court precedent. We believe this carefully reasoned analysis will stand," Ritter told the April 27 Philadelphia Inquirer.

Earlier in April the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund announced it was joining Ritter on Abu-Jamal's defense team. In an LDF press release, Director-Counsel John Payton stated, "This decision marks an important step forward in the

struggle to correct the mistakes of an unfortunate chapter in Pennsylvania history."

Evidence of racial discrimination



Without a doubt prosecutors fear the introduction of evidence gathered over the long years of Abu-Jamal's confinement that raises serious questions about police misconduct and questionable testimony by prosecution witnesses during the 1982 trial.

In recent years photos of the crime scene taken by independent photographer Pedro Polakoff strongly contradict the scenario presented by police, who claim that Abu-Jamal fired multiple shots into the sidewalk where Faulkner lay. Polakoff's photos show no visible bullet marks that should have been evident

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Protests target emergency manager takeover

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Benton Harbor, Mich.

In this southwest Michigan city of approximately 11,000 people, the majority of whom are African American and working class, recent actions by new Gov. Rick Snyder represent a major affront. The passage of a state law on March 9 expands the powers already afforded to the governor to literally reshape municipal and county governments and public school districts.

The law allows a governor to appoint a so-called "emergency financial manager" (EFM) who can suspend the political authority of the mayor, city council or school board and then issue orders for the layoff of workers and the slashing of wages and benefits as well as the seizure of pension funds.

This has already taken place in the majority-African-American, Michigan cities of Pontiac, where an emergency financial manager is still in control, and Highland Park, where for several years the elected local government could only make recommendations to a corporate-oriented state appointee who in most cases acted strictly on behalf of the financial institutions and the transnational corporations.

In Detroit the public school system was taken over by an emergency financial manager appointed by former Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm in 2009. Although the appointment of the EFM was ostensibly designed to lower the budget deficit and clean up corruption, in actuality the deficit rose by nearly \$200 million and questionable practices increased.

In Benton Harbor on April 27, people gathered from around the city and state to demonstrate solidarity with the residents



Benton Harbor, Mich.

April 27 demonstration says 'No' to emergency manager dictatorship.

WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

of this heavily oppressed city. A standing-room-only crowd gathered at the public library, where several speakers, including Mayor Wilce Cooke; the Rev. Edward Pinkney; Margaret Humphreys, a Norton Shores, Mich., resident; the Rev. D. Alexander Bullock of the Michigan Rainbow/PUSH Coalition; and others addressed the crowd.

Wilce called his city "the new Selma of the 21st century." Pinkney, president of the local NAACP and a longtime Benton Harbor activist who served time as a political prisoner, said, "When I warned several years ago that there was a takeover of Benton Harbor planned, some said I was a madman. Now we have a dictatorship."

After the rally the people poured into the streets of downtown Benton Harbor, where they marched and chanted against the state takeover. Joseph Harris, the EFM appointed by the former governor, has drawn criticism from people through-

out Michigan as well as observers around the country.

Corporate origins of economic crisis

Many feel that what is taking place in Benton Harbor is the same program that was attempted in Wisconsin, where Gov. Scott Walker forced a bill through with a Republican majority that effectively outlaws collective bargaining for public sector unions.

By edict of an EFM, elected officials have their authority stripped and the rights of workers can be immediately dissolved and their benefits taken away. Residents of Benton Harbor and the rest of the state do not want this to happen.

Former Michigan resident John Waltz, one of the rally organizers and speakers, is with Heartland Revolution, a Kentucky-based organization. He said ballot language is being turned in for a recall campaign against State Rep. Al Pscholka

of Stevensville, Mich., who proposed the new emergency management bill that recently passed.

After the march through downtown, activists rallied at City Hall and agreed to return on May 7, when Gov. Snyder will serve as grand marshal for the Blossomtime Parade. The community leaders also announced that they would hold another rally on June 18, the eighth anniversary of the 2003 Benton Harbor rebellion.

Benton Harbor has suffered a similar fate as Detroit, which lost most of its industrial jobs over the last three decades. Unemployment in the city is high and so is the rate of home foreclosures.

Speakers at the April 27 rally drew a direct line between the imposition of an EFM and the role of the Whirlpool Corp. and the Harbor Shores Development Project. Whirlpool was once a major employer in Benton Harbor and U.S. Rep. Fred Upton is said to be an heir to the corporation.

Rev. Pinkney said that Pscholka, Upton and the governor were part of a concerted effort to take control of the entire city, as was done with Jean Klock Park, a lakefront property that was privatized for the purpose of establishing the Jack Nicklaus Golf Course and a commercial-residential project worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

"If we had no lakefront property, we'd have no EFM," Pinkney said at the rally. "It's time we come together and fight these bloodsucking corporations."

The situation in Benton Harbor is instructive for many municipalities throughout the U.S. As the economic crisis deepens, the previous notions of universal suffrage and local control will come under increasing attack by the ruling class and the state. □

'No union-busting bill!' Ohio workers launch fightback campaign

By Susan Schnur
Cleveland

On April 25 the Cleveland area AFL-CIO held the official kick-off of the campaign to overturn SB 5, the Ohio Senate bill that would destroy collective bargaining rights for public sector workers in the state.

Before the bill goes into effect, there is a 90-day period of petitioning in which opponents of the union-busting bill must gather over 250,000 signatures of registered voters from at least 44 out of 88 Ohio counties.

More than 500 people packed the Laborers Hall here to receive training and

begin gathering the needed signatures. So many volunteers attended that the We Are Ohio Coalition ran out of petitions and other materials.

The mood was militant and ready to push back against the rich and powerful who want our pension funds, our school



Members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 268 at April 25 Cleveland gathering.

WW PHOTO: SUSAN SCHNUR

funds, our Social Security and whatever else they can steal from our class — the working class! □

Rally supports survivor of anti-trans attack

By Andre Powell
Rosedale, Md.

Nearly 300 people rallied April 25 in front of a Rosedale, Md., McDonald's restaurant, which was the site of a vicious attack on a transgender woman several days before. The rally numbers made it the largest event to date in Baltimore County, Md., in support of the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer community.

Chrissy Polis, age 22, was brutally attacked by two females as she came out of the women's restroom. The attack was captured on video by a McDonald's employee, who posted it on the internet. The video was later picked up by several news media. The video showed the two repeatedly kick Polis as she lay on the floor and then drag her across the floor by her hair. The attack caused Polis to go into epileptic seizures.

As employees watched and laughed,

one lone woman, Vicki Thoms, attempted to pull the attackers off of Polis. Thoms herself was struck several times in the face. After the attack went on for 10 minutes, the manager finally intervened to stop it.

The crowd at the rally was broad-based and multinational. One woman came from as far away as Gettysburg, Pa. Speaking at the rally were Polis' mother and twin brother, who thanked Thoms for stepping in and helping Polis when no one else did. Thoms told the crowd she did not know why it was happening, but she knew it had to be stopped.

Several Black community members and allies addressed the crowd, including Sherry Rawls, founding director of Trans-United in Baltimore; the Rev. Meredith Moise; and radio personality Anthony McCarthy. Maura Keiseling, head of the National Center for Transgender Equality in Washington, D.C., also spoke. □

Arizona youth occupy boardroom: 'Save Ethnic Studies'

By Paul Teitelbaum
Tucson, Ariz.

A racist plan to denigrate a popular Ethnic Studies program in the Tucson schools has aroused resistance from a broad movement spearheaded by young people.

The Tucson Unified School District Board had scheduled a special meeting for 6 p.m. on April 26 to vote on a plan board member Mark Stegeman intended to introduce to reclassify the district's Ethnic Studies program from the Core Curriculum to Electives.

Currently, Mexican-American history as well as other Ethnic Studies classes are part of the Core Curriculum and carry equal value in terms of academic requirements. Under Stegeman's plan every student would have to fulfill the Core requirement of Eurocentric history but could "elect" to take a Mexican-American history class in addition, if they desired.

The TUSD board intends to have the district comply with the racist right-wing agenda and the anti-Ethnic Studies law HB 2281, which went into effect on Jan. 1. This would relegate Ethnic Studies to second-class status in the curriculum and threaten its future removal.

By 5:30 p.m., the lobby of the TUSD building at 1010 E. Tenth Street was filled to capacity. The crowd of hundreds of Ethnic Studies supporters spilled out into the street in front of the building. At 5:45 p.m. the doors to the meeting room were opened, and the room was immediately filled.

A few minutes before the 6 p.m. meeting was to begin, nine youths catapulted to the podium and chained themselves to the nine board member chairs. The group unveiled a banner reading "The Youth School Board" from the podium and led the crowd in the room and the street outside in chants of "Our education is under attack. What do we do? Fight back!"

Other students in the room read a list of 10 demands, including an end to all racist, anti-immigrant, anti-Indigenous

policies; the removal of the Arizona State attorney general, superintendent of schools and governor from their offices; and local control of education.

Board Superintendent John Pedicone was forced to cancel the meeting. The Stegeman plan was never introduced and no vote was taken.

The following morning Pedicone announced that he had turned over video of the meeting to the Tucson Police Department for review in an attempt to file criminal charges against the youths and any adults who supported them.

The next few days were filled with racist rants and calls for retribution against these courageous youth from local right-wing radio talk shows and media outlets. Local immigrant-rights activist Isabel Garcia, who was in the TUSD meeting room at the time of the takeover, was singled out and accused of instigating the "student riot."

This media attack was orchestrated very much the same way as the attack against local sheriff Clarence Dupnik after he blamed the right wing in the wake of the Jan. 8 shootings and attempted assassination of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords.

Pedicone also published an op-ed piece in the local newspaper condemning the students and further insinuating that adults and the Ethnic Studies program itself were to blame for the April 26 takeover. He also announced that the TUSD Board would meet again on May 3 to discuss the Stegeman plan. Pedicone is tripling the number of cops at the meeting and arming them, as well as bringing in metal detectors and mandating searches of every person entering the TUSD Building.

These tactics have not fazed the students or their supporters. Tucson's May Day rally was centered on support for the students and Ethnic Studies. A wide range of community organizations are working to fill the streets on May 3 and fight back against this attack on the fundamental right to comprehensive, quality education. □



Rebecca Whitby, police brutality victim, freed

By Workers World Cleveland bureau

On April 27, family and supporters of Rebecca Whitby cheered and celebrated on the steps of the Justice Center, the site of nearly two years of rallies, as they waited for 25-year-old Rebecca Whitby to be released. Following a brutal, unprovoked beating by two Cleveland police officers in April 2009, Whitby refused to take a plea deal to false charges. Her courageous, principled stand inspired a high-spirited campaign.

"This shows the power of unity," Tim Walker, Whitby's father, declared to WW.

Whitby's mother, also named Rebecca Whitby, was radiant with excitement at her daughter's return. "This is a huge relief. Rebecca's baby needs her. She's been real sick," she told WW.

Judge Daniel Gaul sent Whitby to Ohio Reformatory for Women on March 8, telling her that she needed to come out of "lala land" and confess to the police version of the events on the night of the beating. On the day of the release, however, Gaul asked Whitby simply, "Do you have anything to say?" To which she replied, "No."

Between those two hearings, Whitby's

attorney filed a motion that provided the official basis for her release. In addition, Whitby supporters, including WW readers, contacted a high-ranking official in the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction requesting Whitby's release.

Moreover, on April 8, a grievance was filed against Gaul at the Office of Disciplinary Counsel in Columbus, Ohio, for numerous judicial improprieties in the Whitby case.

Sharon Danann, organizer with the Lucasville Uprising Freedom Network in Ohio, told WW: "The combined impact was the power of the people. Rebecca stood strong, and we are so proud of her. She demonstrated that police brutality does not have to be tolerated."

As conditions of release, Gaul imposed two years of probation and a requirement for psychological counseling for Whitby.

Whitby's aunt and uncle, Marva and Dave Patterson, stated to WW: "We all suffered while Rebecca was incarcerated and were extremely concerned for her safety. All of us must continue to fight injustices wherever we find them. We can no longer allow innocent people to be abused by an unscrupulous judicial system." □

New York

Labor leaders speak at forum



Chris Silvera, Gilbert Johnson, Clarence Thomas

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Members and friends of Workers World Party were inspired by talks given by Gilbert Johnson, president of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 82, and Clarence Thomas, an executive board member of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, at an April 29 WWP forum in New York City. Johnson, based in Milwaukee, Wis., and Thomas from Oakland, Calif., were also featured speakers at the May Day Union Square rally in NYC organized by the May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights.

At the forum, Johnson spoke about his experiences as a union leader at the Uni-

versity of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, including organizing support for the student sit-in against budget cuts, now two months long. Thomas spoke about the heroic rank-and-file shutdown of the Bay Area docks on April 4 in solidarity with the Wisconsin struggle and against current U.S. wars.

Chris Silvera, secretary-treasurer of Teamsters Local 808, and Teresa Gutierrez, a May 1 Coalition co-coordinator and WWP leader, spoke about the significance of a united May Day rally at Foley Square. A delegation from the African-American-led Million Worker March Movement, co-founded by Thomas, attended the forum.

— Monica Moorehead



NEW YORK CITY

WW PHOTOS: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Immigrants, labor unite on May Day

By John Catalinotto

New York

The workers' movement in the United States took a significant step forward this May Day when labor and immigrant organizations in New York City came together after a march and closed the day by exchanging speakers under the banner "May Day Is Workers' Day."

Last year two separate May Day rallies took place in New York. This year there was such a groundswell of sentiment from rank-and-file union members for unity that May Day organizers held several meetings to work out some kind of joint message. Not only was there an exchange of speakers at each other's rallies, but the May 1st Coalition, which gathered at Union Square, decided to march to Foley Square in an attempt to unite workers at both actions.

Thousands of workers, many from the various immigrant communities in New York as well as from unions, and contingents from neighborhood, anti-war, women's, lesbian-gay-bi-trans-queer and other organizations marched for 20 blocks on this sunny spring Sunday from busy Union Square along Broadway to Foley Square downtown.

May Day is celebrated all over the world as a workers' holiday, with strong roots in the socialist movement. Despite originating in the United States, until 2005 — when the Million Worker March Movement intentionally revived it — May Day's role as a workers' holiday had been usurped by Labor Day.

May 1st Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights co-coordinator Teresa Gutierrez made it clear from the start that the group would give high priority to building unity between immigrant workers — of whom 1 million have been deported since President Barack Obama took office — and unionized workers. The coalition cut its rally short at Union Square so that it could step off shortly after 1 p.m. to reach the union rally.

This was the sixth straight year that the May 1st Coalition organized a Union Square action. It began with the 2006 outpouring of immigrant workers that subsequently overturned the Sensenbrenner bill and stopped this anti-immigrant legislation from becoming law. As has been its tradition, the march had strong representation not only from many Latin American communities but from virtually



May 1 Coalition delegation, Chris Silvera, Teresa Gutierrez, Julia Camagong, Clarence Thomas, Gilbert Johnson speak at Foley Square.

all nations around the world whose people come to New York to work and live.

Countrywide solidarity

May 1st organizers gave a national character to the action by inviting two African-American labor leaders whose union struggles are showing the direction in which the labor movement must move to counter the relentless attack by the bosses and bankers.

Gilbert Johnson, president of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 82 at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, brought the mood of the Wisconsin workers' struggle to the rally. Since Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker used alleged budget shortfalls as a pretext to break all the public sector unions, a mass response has reverberated throughout the state, leading to almost daily political and union action. "If the state and the politicians are broke," said Johnson, "then we workers have to fix it."

Clarence Thomas, a leader of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, told how on April 4 the workers in his local voluntarily shut down the ports of Oakland, Calif., and San Francisco for 24 hours in solidarity with the workers in Wisconsin. Thomas pointed out that while "marches and rallies and vigils are good, the bosses can ignore them, but if we workers withhold our labor, that's the real power."

Despite the attacks on immigrants that have seen a million people deported since 2008, the march was militant and upbeat. It included a marching band and a few groups that chanted continuously, sometimes to the beat of drums.

Day laborers, street vendors, domestic workers and unionists marched behind

banners reflecting their organizations. The crowd included at least a hundred members of Vamos Unidos, a Latino vendors' association, plus groups like Domestic Workers United, Jornaleros Unidos de Woodside, the Filipino group BAYAN, Dominican Women Development Center, Desis Rising Up and Moving, 1199SEIU Healthcare Workers East, the Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence, Teamsters Local 808, Workers World Party, Las Buenas Amigas and the Independent Workers Movement.

Reaching Foley Square, the demonstrators marched into a rally of thousands of union workers who were chanting, "The workers united will never be defeated." The Foley Square group included trade unionists from the Laborers' union, Teamsters Local 210, Service Employees 32B-J, Food and Commercial Workers, Professional Staff Congress at City University of New York, Transport Workers Union Local 100, and many members of AFSCME District Council 37.

Assessing the action

"Immigrant workers once again defied threats of deportation in order to demand legalization, an end to raids and the right to organize," said Gutierrez. "Today thou-

sands of immigrant workers and union workers observed International Workers' Day in the U.S. by rallying side by side against cutbacks and for jobs. In New York, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Buffalo and other cities large and small, the two movements joined forces to confront increased attacks on the working class. By uniting, these two forces have strengthened the overall movement against cutbacks, layoffs and foreclosures — as well as given each other more solidarity.

"Now immigrant communities have more allies in their fight against the Department of Homeland Security's racist 'Secure Communities' program," continued Gutierrez. "And unions have more allies in the fight to preserve collective bargaining."

"In 2006 the immigrant workers' movement revived May Day around the country," said Gutierrez. "Now it is being embraced by the wider working class."

Speakers at the Union Square rally included Roberto Meneses, Day Laborers United; Chris Silvera, Teamsters Local 808; Julia Camagong from National Alliance for Filipino Concerns; Rhadames Rivera, 1199 SEIU Healthcare Workers East; Victor Toro, La Peña del Bronx; Larry Hales of New Yorkers Against the Budget Cuts; Joe Lombardo of the United National Antiwar Committee; and Charles Jenkins from Transport Workers Union Local 100. Silvera and Camagong also addressed the Foley Square rally.

Other speakers included Michelle Keller-Ng, vice president of DC37; Lucy Pagoada from Honduras USA Resistencia; Marina Diaz of Centro Tecuman; Hanalei Ramos, BAYAN USA; Jocelyn Campbell, Domestic Workers United; and Wilfredo Larancuent, co-chair of Labor Rights, Immigrant Rights, Jobs for All and business manager of the Laundry Workers Joint Board, Workers United. □



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

WALL STREET — MAY 12: 'The Day We Made Wall Street Stand Still'

All out on May 12 in New York City! Join in a mass march on Wall Street to say 'Enough!' to service cuts, job cuts, wage cuts and other anti-worker, anti-union, anti-poor, anti-youth attacks. Wall Street has the money. It's time to stop budget cuts and make the bosses and bankers pay up! March with New Yorkers Against the Budget Cuts, CUNY Mobilization Network, Transport Workers Union, students, youth and many others. Gather at 4 p.m. at the Bowling Green subway stop, across from 2 Broadway.



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

LOS ANGELES



WW PHOTO: BOB MCCUBBIN

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY 2011

May Day marches in U.S. demand immigration rights

By LeiLani Dowell

International Workers' Day — May Day — was honored throughout the U.S. on May 1 with marches demanding legalization for immigrants and an end to union busting and attacks on workers, including vicious anti-immigrant and anti-worker legislation enacted or under consideration in several states.

The big-business-owned media blocked out much of the news on the many May Day marches which took place from coast to coast. In addition to large actions in New York City and Wisconsin — covered elsewhere in this issue of WW — the following reports and photos highlight some of the marches which took place around the country on May 1.

Declaring "Immigrant Rights = Workers Rights = Human Rights," a largely Latino/a crowd gathered in **ATLANTA** in front of the Georgia State Capitol building on May Day. Speakers included Atlanta-North Georgia Labor Council President Charlie Flemming and Teamsters Local 728 organizer Ben Speight, both of whom strongly condemned the anti-immigrant House Bill 87. This racist piece of legislation passed the state Legislature and is expected to be signed by Gov. Nathan Deal. The more than 1,500 people present, wearing white and carrying signs and banners, roared their approval of appeals to resist the Arizona-copycat law. The Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights, a leader in the fight for immigrant rights in the state, organized the rally.

More than 75 people rallied and marched in **CLEVELAND** in support of immigrant rights and against the Department of Homeland Security. Protesters also supported the fight against Ohio Senate Bill 5, a union-busting bill passed by the Ohio Legislature and signed by Ohio's right-wing governor.

BUFFALO, N.Y., activists and community members marched across the city on May 1 to demand funding for people's needs and to support the rights of unions,



HOUSTON

WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

immigrants, workers, students and communities. The march ended at a nursing home, where it joined a rally of union workers fighting for their patients and their jobs. Buffalo Forum, Citizen Action, Buffalo State Students for Peace and the International Action Center organized the May Day event.

Fight Back! News reports that in **ST. PAUL, MINN.**: "More than 500 people braved frigid temperatures and gusty winds to march from the Cathedral to the Minnesota State Capitol for International Workers' Day. The marchers united around demands to stop the attacks on immigrants, workers and unions that are coming from the state Legislature.

"Colombian trade unionist Gerardo Cajamarca of SEIU Local 26 led off the Capitol rally by strongly condemning the free trade agreements that the U.S. government is trying to impose with Colombia, Panama and south Korea. Phyllis Walker, president of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3800, condemned the state Legislature's attacks on public sector workers and the FBI raids and attacks on anti-war activists in Minnesota."

Thousands marched along Broadway from 11th Street to First Street in **LOS ANGELES** on May 1 demanding immigrant and worker rights. Participants in-

cluded community and anti-war organizations and unions, many organized by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. The mobilization was divided into two marches — the Full Rights for Immigrants Coalition organized one and the Southern California Immigration Coalition called the other. The FRIC has engaged in legislative and get-out-the-vote campaigns with some marches and press conferences leading up to May 1.

The SCIC has increased its community activism since 2010 and has helped to build organizations amongst targeted immigrant communities, exposing police killings and harassment of immigrants. Its actions successfully changed police policy regarding impounding cars, policies that had harmed mostly Black, Latino/a and immigrant communities. The SCIC organized the largest contingent with many buses and vehicles traveling to Arizona to protest SB1070 last year.

The SCIC is made up of rank-and-file members of some of the largest unions in Southern California, including the Latino Caucus of SEIU Local 721. The SCIC-led march included the largest teachers union in Los Angeles, United Teachers of Los Angeles. Unión del Barrio, the International Action Center and the Community Service Organization headed security for the march.

Other participants included BAYAN USA; Hermandad Mexicana TransNacional; MAPA; CISPES-LA, ALBA USA; Alianza Latinoamericana por los Derechos del Inmigrante; Anti-Racist Action/LA; Asians 4 Jericho & Mumia Abu-Jamal; the Association of Raza Educators; the Bus Riders Union; Al-Awda; Workers World Party; School of the Americas Watch, L.A.; Sí Se Puede Asociación de Padres; the Simon Bolívar Los Angeles Association; Somos Raza and the Southeast Asian Network.

HOUSTON residents came out in droves to celebrate May Day. Led by Aztec dancers and followed by immigrants with spinal cord injuries — the Living Hope Wheelchair Association — trade unionists, immigrant and progressive groups such as Justice for Palestinians, Familias



Inmigrantes y Estudiantes en Lucha, and hundreds of families marched together under the clear blue skies to demand an end to the attacks on all working people.

Organized by Houston Unido, a local grassroots immigrant rights coalition made up of two dozen organizations, the march attracted activists of all stripes, including immigrants from Central and South America, anarchists, communists and students as well as some mainstream Democrats. The Green Party spoke, as did the Council on American Islamic Relations. The Houston Peace Council handed out leaflets for the June 4 opening of an exhibit featuring art by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five political prisoners. Spirits were high when Teodoro Aguiluz, director of the Central American Resource Center, told the crowd: "We are not criminals, we are not illegal. It is the bosses getting rich off our work that are the criminals!"

A moment of silence was held at the beginning of the rally to remember those who have died while attempting to get to the U.S., including those traveling across Mexico from Central America and those crossing the U.S./Mexico border. Then a tribute was given to Tim O'Brien, a local activist involved in fighting sweatshops and for free trade at the University of Houston as well as an organizer against executions in Texas. O'Brien died on April 26. His spouse, 5-year-old daughter and sister accepted a framed, color poster for the march, with a dedication written to them from Houston Unido.

The spirit of the day was evident in the student contingents of DREAMers — students fighting for legalization and the right to finish their education. The Council for Minority Student Affairs came from College Station, Texas, home of Texas A&M University; the North Texas Dream Team came from Dallas; and the OK Dream Act came from Tulsa, Okla. The students were the loudest and most exuberant contingent celebrating May Day.

Some 1,000 people attended the 125th Anniversary May Day events in **PROVIDENCE, R.I.** Five hundred mainly immigrant marchers marched from Olneyville, a working-class neighborhood and home to many immigrant peoples. Mobilized by Inmigrantes en Acción, the Olneyville Neighborhood Association and Fuerza Laboral, the marchers were joined by a delegation of the International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades led by District Council 11 representative Scott Duhamel, who is also secretary-treasurer of the Rhode Island Building Trades Council.

They marched to the Dexter Parade Grounds, where a multinational throng of working-class peoples gathered under giant banners calling for social and economic rights for working and oppressed peoples.

The festival — an afternoon of speeches, food and music — took place in the shadow of the giant Cranston Street Armory. It is



NEW YORK

PHOTO: JANET MAYES



BUFFALO, NY

WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE



SAN FRANCISCO

WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

Want rights and end to anti-worker attacks

one of hundreds of armories that the U.S. ruling class ordered to be built nationwide in an attempt to contain the growing working-class populations after a railroad strike in 1877 and the mass marches and strike of May 1, 1886.

The first people to take the stage were Native American brothers of the Eastern Medicine Drum. Joe Buchanan, an African-American member of the Rhode Island Unemployed Council, reminded everyone that enslaved Africans are part of U.S. working-class history, and that the unpaid labor of millions of Africans produced trillions in profits and capital for plantation owners, the banks and the merchant class. He drew thunderous applause when he said, "We have to unite ... Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and poor whites to fight the 'K.K.K.' — Killer Kut-back Kapitalism."

About a thousand people gathered in downtown **TUCSON, ARIZ.**, for May Day. The rally was chaired by youth and consisted almost entirely of young speakers, who focused on the attacks on education and defense of the Tucson students who have come under attack for taking over a school board meeting in defense of their right to an education.

On March 21 in Douglas, Ariz., on the border with Mexico, Border Patrol agents fired three bullets into the back of 19-year-old U.S. resident Carlos Lamadrid, killing him. Members of the Lamadrid family gave a powerful and emotional presentation demanding justice regarding this racist slaughter.



SAN FRANCISCO

WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

More than 2,000 immigrant families and workers as well as union delegations and supporters came out and marched in immigrant communities in Massachusetts near **BOSTON** on May Day. Demonstrators gathered in **EVERETT** and in **EAST BOSTON**, and then marched to City Hall in **CHELSEA** for a united rally. Union delegations included Boston School Bus Drivers, Steelworkers Local 8751; UNITE-HERE; the Service Employees union; and the Food and Commercial Workers union. Yessinia Alfaro and other leaders from Chelsea Collaborative rallied the marchers

from the school bus drivers' sound truck as the march entered the rally site.

The distributions of Workers World newspaper and of a WW article in English and Spanish calling for "Hands Off ILWU Local 10" were well received. Many protesters signed petitions calling for a lawsuit against Local 10 to be dropped. Local 10 workers shut down the ports of San Francisco and Oakland, Calif., on April 4 in solidarity with Wisconsin's embattled workers.

Thousands in **SEATTLE** took part in a 2.7-mile May Day march featuring a broad

array of unions and other working-class and community groups. It was sponsored by El Comite and the May 1st Action Coalition. There were actions along the march route in support of hotel workers, represented by UNITE HERE, and against Chase Bank for ripping off the working class. There were at least four other marches in towns across Washington state.

Bill Bateman, Ellie Dorritie, Dianne Mathiowetz, Jim McMahan, Frank Neisser, John Parker, Gloria Rubac, Susan Schnur and Paul Teitelbaum contributed to this article.

Protest confronts anti-immigrant racism

On April 28 the immigrant community in Chelsea, Mass., and supporters overwhelmed a hearing at Chelsea High School in the heart of the immigrant community to say "No" to the racist police-state-style "Homeland Security" and "Secure Communities" sham. The Tea Party, which boasted they were sending four busloads to the school, produced a paltry pack of about a dozen bigots.

The protest was organized and led by Chelsea Collaborative's "Just Communities" campaign, and had broad union support, including the Boston School Bus Drivers, Steelworkers Local 8751. Signs read "Racist Tea Party Not Welcome in Chelsea."

The "Secure Communities" program is a federal program that involves turning over all information to Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement every time an undocumented immigrant is stopped by police, resulting in even more deportations and divided families. Democratic Gov. Deval Patrick is threatening to sign up Massachusetts to participate in the racist program.

— Workers World Boston bureau



LOS ANGELES

WW PHOTO: BOB MCCUBBIN



Chelsea, Mass.

WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

Unity agreement bolsters struggle for a free Palestine

By Gene Clancy

Thousands of Palestinians in both Gaza and the West Bank cheered the news that the occupied Palestinian territories had taken a major step toward reconciliation. On April 27 the movements of Hamas and Fatah announced an agreement to unite. In a move that seems to have stunned the Western imperialist diplomatic world, the two groups agreed to create an interim unity government and hold elections within a year.

The agreement, made following secret talks sponsored by the caretaker Egyptian government, was announced at a news conference in Cairo. Referring to each other as "brothers," the two negotiators declared a new chapter in the Palestinian struggle for independence, which had been hobbled in recent years by the split between the Fatah-run West Bank and Hamas-run Gaza.

The deal highlighted Egypt's evolving foreign policy, its increasing regional influence and its changing relationship with Israel. Spurred on by the Egyptian mass movement, the new Egyptian government has pursued Palestinian negotiations aggressively; has recognized the Muslim Brotherhood, which has deep ties to Hamas; and is reconsidering whether to

go forward with a deal to provide natural gas to Israel. It has also asserted a friendlier attitude toward Iran.

The agreement is also an unmistakable sign of the importance of the Arab revolution that has swept the Middle East and North Africa. As Azzam al-Ahmad, the Fatah negotiator, said after the news conference in Cairo: "The changes in the Arab region and the political upheaval contributed to reducing the pressure on the Palestinian factions, and by pressure I mean the negative kind of pressure." (New York Times, April 27)

The U.S.-supported state of Israel was quick to respond to news of the agreement. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said a unity agreement would put an end to negotiations with the Palestinian Authority. He threatened the PA, saying it "must choose between peace with Israel and peace with Hamas." President Shimon Peres said the agreement would prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state and "sabotage any chance for peace." (Washington Post, April 28)

Actually, the Israeli Zionist regime and the U.S. imperialist government have systematically sabotaged any and all efforts of the Palestinians and others to achieve peace in what is, after all, the Palestinian homeland.

Hamas won the 2007 elections in the occupied territories. The Israelis promptly imprisoned the new Parliament as the U.S. cut off all foreign aid to the Palestinian Authority. Enormous pressure was put on the PA leadership to cave in to Israeli demands. As they dragged out the U.S.-sponsored talks, the Israelis increased the pace of their illegal settlements on the West Bank while waging a cruel war and blockade on Gaza.

Mkhaimar Abusada, a professor of political science at Al-Azhar University in Gaza, said that the Palestinian Authority's failure to reach an agreement with Israel and its anger over the U.S. veto in February of a United Nations Security Council resolution opposing Israeli settlement construction had encouraged Fatah to come to an agreement with Hamas. The Islamic group, he said, was motivated to get closer to Fatah by regional changes — the revolutions sweeping the Arab world. (New York Times, April 27)

"We have ended a painful period in the history of the Palestinian people where Palestinian division had prevailed," Moussa Abu Marzouk, a representative of Hamas who negotiated the agreement, said at the Cairo news conference. "We gave the occupation a great opportunity to expand the settlements because of this division. Today we turn this page and open a new page."

At the news conference Fatah negotia-

tor Ahmad recalled the recent chants of young Palestinian demonstrators:

"To all the Palestinian youth who went out saying, 'The people want to end the division' and 'The people want to end the occupation,' we say what you demanded was achieved today."

He said that Israeli officials had warned Palestinian Authority President and Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas not to collaborate with Hamas, but "he did not heed the warning, and he responded, 'Yes, we want Hamas.'"

Another expert summed up this defeat for Washington's maneuvers to divide the Palestinians very succinctly: "It's essentially a great blow for American policy," said Nathan Brown, a professor of political science and international affairs at George Washington University. (cnn.com, April 27) As proof of that, Salam Fayyad, who had been prime minister of the West Bank and was seen as closest to the U.S. of all the PA authorities, will not be part of the interim government.

Progressives around the world hailed this new step in the Palestinian struggle and vowed to redouble their efforts to force an end to the illegal Israeli blockade of Gaza, the illegal settlements on Palestinian land, and the oppressive occupation of the Palestinian territories. □

Egyptian workers celebrate May Day

By G. Dunkel

Red flags waved across Tahrir Square as thousands of Egyptian workers celebrated May Day in Cairo. Holding up Egyptian, Libyan, Syrian, Palestinian and Communist Party flags, the marchers chanted for "Social Justice."

The countrywide explosion of strikes for higher wages, better working conditions and job security ever since former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was forced out in early February by massive protests was reflected at this militant rally.

Workers from factories across Egypt and from many unions, including the newly founded Federation of Independent Labor Unions, and various left par-

ties marched around the square, carrying their banners and signs high. Political organizations represented included the Egyptian Socialist Party, Egyptian Communist Party, the liberal Ghad Party, the Revolutionary Socialists, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Workers' Democratic Party.

Union representatives called for the formation of independent labor unions; a major increase in the monthly minimum wage, from 400 Egyptian pounds (\$70) to 1200 Egyptian pounds (\$200); and a salary cap set at 15 times the minimum wage. They also called for the trials of the corrupt and brutal Mubarak-appointed union leaders of the Egyptian General Federation of Trade Unions. □



Tahrir Square in Cairo, May 1.

To justify U.S. role

Corporate media rewrite Egypt events

By Caleb T. Maupin

In the United States, big media, like all other powerful institutions in the economy, are owned by and operated for the capitalists. Pentagon contractor General Electric owns NBC and MSNBC. Australian media tycoon Rupert Murdoch owns the FOX network. Robert Eiger now owns the ABC-Disney-Pixar media cartel, taking over the role once held by racist, anti-communist Walt Disney.

Despite claims of "freedom" and "democracy," U.S. television networks and major newspapers are nothing more than Wall Street's and the Pentagon's "Ministry of Information." Just a few months after the Egyptian Revolution deposed President Hosni Mubarak, they are rewriting the entire history of this world-shaking event to suit their previous narrative of world politics.

From the day he took office, Mubarak

was a U.S. client ruler.

Mubarak's regime rigged elections, securing him 29 years of unchallenged rule. The CIA trained his secret police forces. Washington sent his government billions of dollars each year, mostly to the military, second in amount only to Israel.

The U.S. even looked to Mubarak's secret police for its rendition program, allowing these thugs to conduct torture for the U.S. when technicalities of U.S. law tied its own hands.

Mubarak's "National Democratic Party" had an official international relationship with the British Labor Party. Mubarak received praise and admiration from the U.S. for his role in repressing "extremists" who favored democracy and less cooperation with Israel and the United States.

U.S. Vice President Joe Biden made clear he did not believe Mubarak was a dictator, despite obvious reality.

All the major networks and newspapers

featured "policy analysts," including Fox's soon-to-be-ex-analyst, the rabid Glenn Beck, who voiced fears that the popular revolution was "dangerous" and would create an opening for "Islamic radicals."

When Mubarak refused to step down as millions took the streets, no cruise missiles were fired at his home. No trade embargo was placed on the country. There was no talk of a no-fly zone. Hillary Rodham Clinton reassured the world that the U.S.-backed dictator's army was "practicing restraint." (ABC News, Jan. 30) Clinton also made clear there was no intention of cutting off billions of dollars of aid. There would just be more discussion about reform while the brutal regime continued to be bankrolled by the U.S.

Despite the efforts of Washington to change a few faces at the top without changing the system, Wall Street's hit man has been removed by a heroic, popular uprising. Workers' councils have

formed in the factories. Students and organized labor continue to resist as the military rules an uneasy, unstable, post-Mubarak Egypt.

After leaving office, Mubarak was not hanged or given a sham trial like Saddam Hussein. He is in no danger of having his relatives killed with NATO surgical air strikes like Moammar Gadhafi.

The new narrative

But despite reality, a new narrative is being constructed about Egypt, even though the same abuses of power continue in many countries throughout the Middle East.

The U.S.-backed autocracy in Bahrain commits brutal crimes against humanity, putting down a similar popular uprising. Though Washington funds Israel and backs the Saudi and Bahraini monarchies, it is still continually called a "defender of

Continued on page 9

Calling it all a 'humanitarian mission'

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

NATO airstrikes carried out April 30 against the home of the son of Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi killed three of Gadhafi's grandchildren as well as his youngest son, Saif al-Arab Gadhafi. The attacks took place amid a dramatic escalation in fighting between Libyan government forces and the Western-backed rebels in various parts of the North African state.

It was reported that the Libyan leader and his spouse Safiyah Gadhafi were at the son's residence at the time of the bombing but were not injured. This airstrike follows three previous attacks on the former chairperson of the African Union, all since the U.S. and NATO bombing of Libya began on March 19.

In a statement on this attempted assassination of the country's leader, Libyan government spokesperson Moussa Ibrahim said: "This is not permitted by international law. It is not permitted by any moral code or principle... We think now it is clear to everyone that what is happening in Libya has nothing to do with the protection of civilians." (Al-Jazeera, May 1)

Despite all the evidence to the contrary, the NATO commander of the war against Libya, Lt. Gen. Charles Bouchard, said of the bombing, "All NATO's targets are military in nature and have been clearly linked to the regime's systematic attacks on the Libyan population and populated areas. We do not target individuals."

The Libyan spokesperson noted that Saif al-Arab Gadhafi was a civilian and a student in Germany. The government took journalists on a tour of his home in the immediate aftermath of the NATO attack.

Responses to NATO escalation

International criticism and condemnation followed the announcement of the assassinations of Gadhafi's son and three grandchildren. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told a press conference on April 30 that NATO is preparing for a ground invasion and occupation of the North African state. Lavrov said, "The information we have from our channels shows that both NATO and the EU are working on similar plans." He added that the Russian government understands that the ground operations against Libya will also be carried out under the guise of a humanitarian mission. (Russian Television)

The Russian official called for the Unit-



Above, Gadhafi with granddaughter Hanna. Right, Saif al-Arab Gadhafi.

NATO intensifies airstrikes on Libya, kills leader's son, grandchildren



ed Nations Security Council to address this issue prior to any invasion of Libya. "If anybody wants to ask for this idea for carrying out a ground campaign to the U.N. Security Council, then we will discuss it there and try to understand what is being planned on the ground."

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said during the previous week that the military campaign against Libya goes far beyond the mandate of Resolution 1973 passed by the U.N. Security Council on March 16. Russia and four other countries abstained on the Security Council vote, which was pushed by the U.S., Britain and France and then used to start an imperialist war against Libya.

Putin asked in an interview with Novosti newswire in Moscow, "What kind of no-fly zone is this if they are striking palaces every night?" Putin said that the real objective behind the war against Libya was the West's desire to take control of the oil resources inside the country, which are the largest known reserves on the African continent.

Anna Alwes, a research fellow at the South African Institute of International Affairs, told the Xinhua press agency that the Western powers began their bombing operation against Libya under false pretenses and that these actions cannot be justified in light of the deaths of thousands of civilians. South Africa's representative on the Security Council had voted for the resolution.

Alwes concurs with other analysts throughout the world that the Western intervention into the conflict in Libya will result in a prolonged war that will have long-term international ramifications. She said: "I see no immediate solution to the conflict between NATO forces and the Libyan rebels on one side, and Moammar Gadhafi on the other. The ongoing civil war is fated to become an internal cancer that will destroy territorial unity and lead to a partition." (Xinhua, April 30)

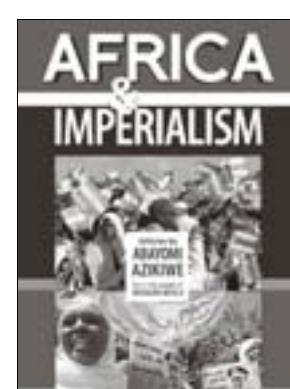
Continued from page 8

democracy" on every major TV channel.

Obama's speech justifying bombing Libya repeatedly claimed the U.S. was acting for "humanitarian" reasons and "human rights." Just naming a few of the brutal dictatorships the U.S. supports refutes this lie. But naming these names has never been part of the national image the U.S. media have created.

Even Jon Stewart, the sarcastic television commentator who often views the U.S. government with cynicism, featured a guest who claimed that the U.S. "inspired" the revolution by setting up English-speaking universities throughout Egypt.

Despite the fact that U.S.-made bullets killed protesters, U.S.-trained secret police tortured them, and the U.S. media denounced them as "terrorists" and "radical Islamists," the U.S. supported the protesters all along? Give me a break. □



AFRICA & IMPERIALISM

Articles by Abayomi Azikiwe from the pages of Workers World

- Africa struggles against imperialism
- WikiLeaks on U.S. role in Africa
- Tunisian masses rebel
- South African workers strike
- Famine in the Sahel
- Women at forefront of liberation struggles
- Africa increases trade with China \$2 (plus \$1 shipping)

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In a statement issued by the New York-based International Action Center in direct response to the assassinations of the Libyan leader's family members, the long-time anti-war organization noted that the many U.S. wars and occupations "have nothing to do with alleged misdeeds of the national leaders, be they Saddam Hussein, Slobodan Milosevic, the Taliban or Gadhafi. ... They are nothing but the imperialists' attempt to reconquer and re-colonize strategic regions. They are doing it with the resources stolen from workers and the poor at home. It's time we put a stop to them."

Crowds attack Western embassies in Libya

Thousands of Libyans, outraged by the airstrikes, demonstrated on May 1, chanting anti-U.S./NATO slogans and burning U.S. flags. Some went on to attack the embassies of the U.S., Britain and Italy. Britain responded by expelling Libya's ambassador to London. The U.N. announced on May 2 that it was withdrawing 12 officials from Tripoli and sending them to Tunisia after its building was also attacked.

No one was injured in the attacks on the diplomatic missions in Tripoli. Most of the personnel had been removed weeks ago as these imperialist governments intensified their war against Libya.

Thousands of Libyans attended the funeral of Saif al-Arab Gadhafi on May 2 and marched through the streets of the capital in defiance of the U.S. and NATO.

War spreads to Tunisia border

Libyan military forces are continuing to shell the hotly contested western port city of Misrata in an effort to retake the area, which has become a base for the channeling of arms and other military supplies from the rebel stronghold of Benghazi.

Government troops have also attacked rebel positions on the border between Libya and Tunisia at Dehiba-Wazin and are fighting to dislodge rebel units from the western Nafusah mountain range, where fighting has spilled over into Tunisia.

Outside Zintan, southwest of the capital of Tripoli, NATO reportedly carried out airstrikes on Libyan governmental forces fighting to dislodge rebel units operating in the area. (Reuters, May 2)

The escalation in the fighting has prompted thousands of refugees to flee across the border into Tunisia. Saleh Aou-

ni, from the town of Yafran, told Reuters press agency: "We can no longer live there. ... Not an hour goes by without shelling."

Tunisian military forces have set up six checkpoints along the way into Dehiba in order to monitor the situation on the border. Shells have landed inside Tunisia and several Libyan military vehicles have reportedly pursued the Western-backed rebels into the area.

NATO airstrikes, which the U.S.-dominated military organization claims are carefully targeted, have also killed anti-government rebels supported by the imperialist states. On April 27, 12 rebels were killed in a NATO bombing operation near the embattled city of Misrata, the country's third largest with a population of 300,000.

The U.S. and NATO have suffered severe setbacks in their ongoing wars of occupation in Afghanistan and Iraq. A sharp increase in the number of U.S. and NATO casualties was reported for the month of April.

These military setbacks are also taking place in conjunction with the fierce resistance being waged by the Libyan military against the Western-backed rebels and the imperialist states. Increasing condemnation of the U.S./NATO war on Libya has eroded political support for the Obama administration as well as for the governments of Britain, France and Italy.

At the same time the war in Libya has prompted a rise in fuel prices and the economic crisis in the Western capitalist states is escalating.

With the announced assassination of Osama bin Laden, the ruling classes inside the U.S. and Western Europe were hoping for a rise in the stock markets. It didn't happen.

The drastic attacks on workers and their trade unions in the capitalist states have sparked mass demonstrations as well as intensified the class consciousness of workers struggling to survive the imposition of austerity measures in these industrialized countries.

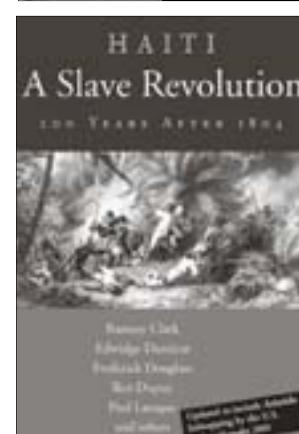
The burgeoning working-class struggle must link the Pentagon budget and the war drive with the worsening conditions of the masses. These attacks by the imperialists on oppressed nations will not alleviate the true source of the economic crisis, which comes from the capitalist system and its constant need to intensify its exploitation of labor and the world's resources. □



GAZA: Symbol of Resistance

A book of articles from WW, edited by Joyce Chediac

The compelling story of how Gazans withstood blockade and bombardment only to stand tall, refusing to give up the right to determine their own lives and to choose their own government; how Gaza's courage inspired a worldwide solidarity movement determined to break the blockade and deliver aid; exposes the forces behind the punishment of Gaza, and how a growing people's media is breaking the mainstream media's information blockade on this event.



HAITI: A Slave Revolution

200 Years after 1804 Updated 2010: Includes the coup against President Aristide and the January 2010 earthquake.

Authors include: Mumia Abu-Jamal, Ramsey Clark, Pat Chin, Edwidge Danticat, Frederick Douglass, Greg Dunkel, Ben Dupuy, Sara Flounders, Stan Goff, Kim Ives, Fleurimond Kerns, Paul Laramée, Maud LeBlanc, Sam Marcy, Franz Mendes & Steve Gillis, Felix Morisseau-Leroy, Johnnie Stevens, Abayomi Azikiwe, Larry Hales, Monica Moorehead, Saeed Shabazz.

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WORKERS WORLD
editorial

The killing of Osama bin Laden Why they wanted him dead, not alive

Continued from page 1

taken alive, so that his crimes could be laid out in a court of justice before the whole world? He is not reported to have killed himself in his bunker, as Adolf Hitler did. Only a handful of aides were with him, the U.S. president said.

For professional soldiers, capturing bin Laden should have been easy, even if he resisted. They could have used stun grenades or tear gas. But instead they killed him. And no one is saying that the commandos erred and didn't carry out their orders.

So it's obvious U.S. authorities didn't want to put bin Laden on trial. What are some of the embarrassing things that could have come out?

For starters, there are bin Laden's years of service to the CIA, which employed him and his followers in the 1980s during the U.S. war to bring down the pro-socialist, secular government in Afghanistan. Since 2001, U.S. forces have been back in Afghanistan fighting against "enemies" Washington created. The U.S. establishment wants that part of bin Laden's résumé forgotten.

Then there is the question of his relations with the Saudi monarchy, which is very tight with the oil-soaked U.S. ruling class, especially the Bush family and its two U.S. presidents, George H.W. Bush and his son. What might bin Laden have revealed about the secret deals they made over Iraq and its oil, for example?

And there is the question of 9/11 itself. One would think that would have been a prosecutor's dream — to try bin Laden for the deaths at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. But no. They quickly finished him off — and with him any attempts to clarify the many lingering questions.

The capitalist media — just about all of them — are dutifully whipping up a triumphal, celebratory mood around this strange denouement. It can't last. Once the march-in-lockstep hoopla is over, the questions must come creeping out of their temporary hiding places.

Whatever bin Laden may have been guilty of, how much bigger are the crimes that can be traced to those who hunted him? Not just buildings full of

people but whole countries in the region have been blown up, knocked down and made unlivable by U.S. bombs. Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, now Libya — all have suffered merciless attacks that have left villages and even whole cities destroyed, their people blown apart, rounded up and tortured, or left to slowly die or suffer from their wounds, hunger and thirst.

What have all these wars — in the name of fighting terrorism — done but produce more anger and more willingness of the invaded peoples to sacrifice everything fighting the powers that drop sudden death from the skies?

But the biggest crime is that it all has been done for money. All the patriotic bluster, the "Mission Accomplished" bragging, is hype. The winners are not the 9/11 families and survivors, and certainly not the soldiers. They're lucky to get health care or a job, if they come back. The winners are the billionaire pack who, at the end of the day, have tripled their investments in oil, armaments and private rent-a-mercenary companies.

These are capitalist wars, pure and simple. Coming from a wealthy Saudi family, bin Laden must have known a lot about who made deals for what. He had to be rubbed out.

Those who cooked up this scenario have a much bigger problem than bin Laden on their hands, however. Their wars have helped arouse a mass movement across North Africa and into the Middle East that can't just be assassinated and disposed of.

Meanwhile, the U.S. government continues to commit budget-busting trillions of dollars to cover past, present and future wars while it is cutting back every useful social service at the same time millions are jobless and struggling to cover basic necessities.

Something's gotta give. And that something is the patience of the working class, which has run out already in Wisconsin and in thousands of other battles against the billionaires and their bought-and-paid-for politicians. The genie is out of the bottle, and killing bin Laden isn't going to coax it back in again. □



May Day marchers in Sancti Spiritus, Cuba, demand freedom for the Cuban Five, anti-terrorist heroes imprisoned in the U.S.

Int'l Workers' Day request

From the editors of WW

From Havana to Caracas, from Istanbul to Johannesburg, from Kolkata to Manila, hundreds of thousands of workers celebrated International Workers' Day on May 1, bringing their demands into the streets and showing their strength. We focused this week's issue on covering May Day in the United States — which is where May Day originated and where it is now making a comeback as a day of workers' struggle. Our coverage of most international May Day actions will be in the next issue. If there was a May 1 demonstration in your city, please send a short description and a photo, if you have one, to jcat@workers.org. □

Wisconsin May Day



100,000 demand rights for immigrants & unions

Continued from page 1

Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the United Auto Workers, including a member of UAW Local 833 at the Kohler Company.

At the main rally, historic solidarity was displayed among immigrant rights groups, organized labor, and youth and students. Among the speakers were Christine Neuman-Ortiz, executive director of Voces de la Frontera; Richard Trumka, president of the AFL-CIO; Mahlon Mitchell, president of the Wisconsin Firefighters Association; Michael Rosen of the American Federation of Teachers Local 212; Phil Neuenfeldt of the Wisconsin AFL-CIO; and numerous youth activists from Voces de la Frontera youth organization. Other student organizations such as UWM Occupied (the group occupying a portion of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Student Union) and Students for a Democratic Society in Wisconsin participated.

Speakers denounced the racist attacks against immigrants of color and the attempted union busting in Wisconsin and around the U.S. and pointed to the banks, corporations and Pentagon as the real enemies of poor and working people.

Trumka came to Milwaukee's May Day to show unity with the immigrant workers' struggle and with the struggle against union busting in Wisconsin. "Now your

Gov. Scott Walker ... has declared war on Wisconsin workers and, like you did before, you joined in a peaceful protest to say 'No! No!' said Trumka. "This day — May Day — is our day, our day to stand together shoulder to shoulder for immigrant and worker rights. Thank you for being here and showing Wisconsin and the world that we are one."

Participants came from all over Wisconsin on buses and car caravans. Workers also came from other states to show their solidarity. Delegations from the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice, the Moratorium NOW! Coalition and Workers World Party came from Detroit.

After the May Day march and rally, a group of activists participated in the annual ceremony in the Bay View area of Milwaukee marking the 125th anniversary of the May 5, 1886, tragedy in which the state militia shot into some 1,500 workers marching for an eight-hour day, killing seven in front of the Milwaukee Iron Co. rolling mill, then Milwaukee's largest manufacturing plant.

There was also a May 1 march and rally at the state Capitol in Madison.

For more information, updates and upcoming activities: www.vdlf.org; www.wisafcio.org; wisafcio.typepad.com; www.defendwisconsin.org; www.bailout-people.org. □



WW PHOTOS: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

FREE THE CUBAN FIVE



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Rene González Sehwerert, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez & Fernando González Llort.

Terror & the Osama bin Laden assassination

By Sara Flounders

Very little is known about the top-secret U.S. operation that executed Osama bin Laden, except what President Barack Obama chose to announce: that U.S. secret forces found bin Laden, killed him May 1 and disposed of his body at sea on May 2.

Although Obama hailed this as a "turning point in the war on terror," it is clear that he was not proposing any plans to bring U.S. troops home. Instead, the resulting jingoistic media barrage is being used to celebrate the three unpopular wars that have devastated Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, at the cost of more than 1 million lives and \$1 trillion over the past 10 years.

The orchestrated celebration of this military operation will justify further expansion of the military budget, weapons systems and tactics like targeted assassinations, secret rendition and new drone attacks.

The threat of shadowy bin Laden and the al-Qaida network has been used again and again to build support for U.S. wars, repressive legislation, maximum security measures and wide-ranging attacks on civil liberties.

Obama warned of "violent attacks around the world after the death of bin Laden." Such dire yet vague warnings might also be used to push through new legislation giving a blank check to wildly increased levels of repression within the U.S. and to waging new U.S. wars abroad without any form of Congressional debate or authorization. Such pieces of legislation are already introduced in both houses of Congress.

House bill H.R.968 and Senate bill S.551 are expected to be included in the upcoming military appropriations bill. These ever-expanding annual military

appropriation budgets now sail through Congress without question or discussion.

Creating anti-Muslim bigotry

The constant threat of terror attacks has whipped up a climate of anti-Muslim hate and fear in large parts of the population. Racism and fear are essential props of imperialist war. Whenever support for U.S. wars and the mood of hatred seems to wane, U.S. officials from local prosecutors to FBI and national police agencies uncover a new "plot." Many have been exposed as scurrilous acts of entrapment against immigrants. But the media feeding frenzy lasts for weeks and poisons all relations.

Although no other attack blamed on Muslims has taken place since Sept. 11, 2001, hundreds of Muslims in the past 10 years have been sentenced to decades and even life in prison based on frenzied and flimsy charges. Thousands of Arab and South Asian immigrants have been deported without any appeal or due process. Thousands more have simply "disappeared," as victims of extra-judicial kidnapping and secret rendition.

This is hardly the first U.S. political assassination. Progressive and revolutionary figures like Che Guevara in Bolivia, Patrice Lumumba in Congo and Salvador Allende in Chile were killed at the behest of the CIA. Today hundreds of drone attacks routinely target thousands of civilians in villages from Libya, Pakistan and Afghanistan to Yemen, Sudan and Somalia.

No declaration of war, no evidence and no discussion precede or follow these attacks. Similar targeted assassinations by Israel are now considered routine in the West Bank and Gaza.

The assassination of bin Laden completely overwhelmed all coverage of NATO's attempt to assassinate Moam-

mar Gadhafi in Libya, which resulted in the death of Gadhafi's son and three grandchildren in a missile strike.

It is significant that the operation against bin Laden comes at the very beginning of President Obama's announced new presidential campaign. It immediately raised his ratings in the corporate media, which are tied to the largest military corporations, at a time when big business is demanding more givebacks and every state and city is instituting cutbacks.

U.S. war created bin Laden

Of course, the assassination of bin Laden raises many questions. He was not killed in a cave in Afghanistan or even near the border area, but in the center of the military stronghold of Abbottabad, just 100 yards from the Kakul Military Academy, the school for training officers of the Pakistani Army. It is a little like finding bin Laden in an estate next door to West Point Military Academy.

It is difficult to imagine that this elaborate compound was unknown. In the past decade U.S. military aid to Pakistan has surpassed \$20 billion. It has left the people of Pakistan impoverished and the military more bloated, repressive and corrupt than before. The war in Afghanistan continues at a cost of \$2 billion a week. U.S. wars and unlimited military aid are a source of fantastic profit to private contractors and hundreds of U.S. military corporations and banks.

It is almost impossible to find a description of bin Laden that does not include the role of U.S. secret agencies in funding and training him during the years of war against the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in the 1980s. The U.S. had no trouble supporting a reactionary political outlook then that was disconnected from mass movements and progressive social issues and willing to use political terror, fanaticism and sectarian violence.

Again and again divisive sectarian bombings and attacks in Iraq and Af-

ghanistan have been blamed on al-Qaida operatives, even when these acts have seemed to put a brake on unified mass resistance, thus assisting the continuing U.S. occupation.

In the past three months unified resistance by millions of people across the Arab world has challenged U.S. corporate domination and U.S.-supported dictators in a way that isolated sectarian bombing never could. It is no stretch to speculate that U.S. and Israeli "secret ops" may turn to bombings and massacres by unknown groups to create fear, sectarian divisions and new excuses for massive repression against the Arab Spring of revolutionary upheavals.

This is an old police tactic, used all too effectively against workers' struggles in the past. On May Day in Chicago 125 years ago, a bomb thrown by police agents in what came to be called the Haymarket Riot was used to frame up organizers advocating the eight-hour workday and break up the workers' movement.

An April 28 bombing at a café in Marrakesh, Morocco, that killed 16 people, many of them Western tourists, seemed to be directed not at the corrupt monarchy but at dampening the mass resistance that was spreading.

That bombing was immediately an excuse for a crackdown by the government and a reversal of the constitutional reforms that King Mohammed VI had promised after massive demonstrations demanding reforms and democracy. Security forces have since been stationed in Morocco's main cities, supposedly to protect the public.

It is too soon to know the fallout of the latest U.S. secret operation in Pakistan. But we do know the U.S. has no plans to end the terror of its "war on terror."

Every effort must be made to challenge the ugly, pro-war climate being whipped up. Demands to end these wars and bring all U.S. troops home must become part of every struggle generated by the cutbacks and the growing attacks on unions. □

Court upholds new sentencing hearing for Mumia Abu-Jamal

Continued from page 3
in the sidewalk.

Philadelphia journalist Linn Washington Jr. noted, "The same Philadelphia and Pennsylvania courts that found major flaws by either defense attorneys, police, prosecutors and/or trial judges in 86 Philadelphia death penalty convictions during a 28-year period after Abu-Jamal's December 1981 arrest declare no errors exist anywhere in the Abu-Jamal case — an assertion critics call statistically improbable.

"The federal Third Circuit, for example, declined to grant Abu-Jamal a new trial based on solid legal issues from racial discrimination by prosecutors in jury selec-

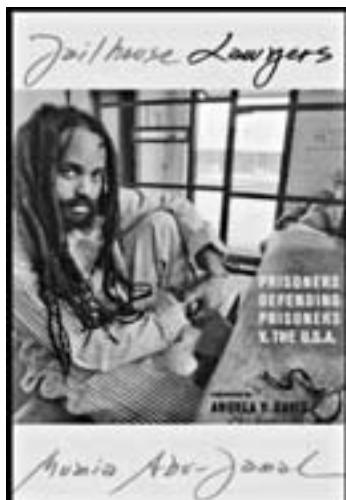
tion to documented errors by trial judge Albert Sabo, the late jurist who relished his infamous reputation for pro-prosecution bias." (thiscantbehappening.net)

While Mumia's attorneys kept the state from reinstating the death sentence, the recent court ruling is not truly a victory for Abu-Jamal since it fails to call for a new trial. A new sentencing hearing would still only offer the option of life in prison versus the death sentence. Neither is acceptable!

While the state clearly fears the introduction of new evidence into the court proceedings, their greater concern continues to be the growing international movement supporting Abu-Jamal's claim of innocence and demanding his freedom.

Since the summer of 1995, when major protests forced then Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge to back down on his plans to carry out Abu-Jamal's execution, this movement has proven time and again that people's power is critical to winning any favorable ruling in this case.

Around the world there are growing examples of people's movements forcing governments to respond to their demands. The movement to free Mumia Abu-Jamal must continue to organize globally, be vigilant, keep alert, and above all not let the prolonged years of court hearings wear them down. Free Mumia! Free all political prisoners! □



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¿Qué consignas adelantarán la lucha obrera?

Por David Sole

Cada gran lucha tiene su consigna.

Durante la Revolución Francesa de 1789 las masas arremetieron contra la Bastilla gritando "libertad, fraternidad, igualdad". Los/as trabajadores/as y campesinos/as en la Revolución rusa de 1917 demandaban "pan, paz y tierra".

¿Cuál será la meta para la lucha que emerge en los Estados Unidos?

¿Qué estarán pensando los líderes sindicales de este país cuando promueven la consigna "defendamos la clase media"? Esta consigna no viene de uno o dos individuos confundidos. Ha sido promovida por Richard Trumka, el presidente internacional de la AFL-CIO, por Bob King, presidente del Sindicato de trabajadores/as automotrices (UAW), y por numerosos/as líderes sindicales a nivel estatal y local.

Desde luego que estos sindicalistas deben ser elogiados por finalmente haber convocado protestas masivas en contra del vicioso ataque que en forma de recortes salariales y de beneficios, afecta especialmente a los/as trabajadores/as públicos/as. Los/as trabajadores/as han estado respondiendo acudiendo masivamente — en Wisconsin cientos de miles — a las numerosas marchas y manifestaciones al ver destruir sus derechos de negociación colectiva, recortar sus salarios y amenazar sus pensiones. Una lucha ya retrasada parece estar tomando forma.

En la línea de piquete

Por Sue Davis

Litigación defiende trabajadores/as inmigrantes

Unas granjas en Hawaii y en el estado de Washington así como también la Global Horizons Inc., contratista de mano de obra basado en California, están siendo demandados en corte por la Comisión de Oportunidades Iguales de Empleo (EEOC por sus siglas en inglés) por discriminar contra más de 200 trabajadores/as inmigrantes de Tailandia. (New York Times, 21 de abril)

Global Horizons confiscó los pasaportes de los/as trabajadores/as y los/as amenazó con deportarlos si se quejaban de las condiciones. Acusados en la litigación estaban ocho granjas incluyendo Del Monte Fresh Produce. El NY Times dijo que éste fue "el caso más grande de tráfico de seres humanos en la industria agrícola del país".

También la EEOC entabló un reclamo en Mississippi contra la compañía de servicios marinos Signal International, diciendo que 500 inmigrantes de India enfrentaron discriminación y condiciones de vida inferior a lo establecido en Texas y Mississippi. Estos/as trabajadores/as inmigrantes, tentados/as a la zona de Nueva Orleans para trabajar en la limpieza de la ciudad después de los huracanes de 2005, han estado luchando por la justicia desde 2006.

Deciden que Boeing es antisindical

La Junta Nacional de Relaciones Laborales impartió una queja contra Boeing el 20 de abril, tratando de forzar la compañía de aviones a no trasladar la producción a una fábrica que no tiene sindicato en Carolina de Sur, sino a usar sus facilidades en el estado de Washington donde sí existe el sindicato. La queja dijo que la mudanza "estuvo motivada por un deseo ilegal de ejercer represalias contra los/as trabajadores/as sindicales por sus huelgas pasadas en Washington y para desalentar huelgas futuras". (New York Times, 21 de abril)

La acción "enfureció a grupos de negocios y algunos políticos que dijeron que fue un intento injustificado por el gobierno de interferir con una decisión corporativa fundamental". (New York Times, 23 de abril) Seguiremos informando. □

Pero levantando la bandera "defendamos la clase media" al frente de este movimiento no sólo es una descripción inexacta. Es también perjudicial a la misma lucha que están intentando promover. El diccionario en línea de Merriam-Webster describe la clase media como una "ocupando una posición entre la clase alta y la clase baja ... integrada principalmente por negociantes y profesionales, burócratas, y algunos agricultores y trabajadores con grandes destrezas".

Aunque la mayoría de los/as trabajadores/as pueda que no haya consultado el Merriam-Webster, sabe que son parte de la clase trabajadora, (despectivamente llamada "baja").

Es verdad que algunos líderes sindicales, como Bob King del UAW, explican que apoyan a los/as trabajadores/as "para que tengan y mantengan un estándar de vida decente de clase media", (Solidarity, marzo/abril de 2011) pero en el párrafo siguiente él confunde un estándar decente de vida con la "necesidad de reconstruir la Gran Clase Media Americana".

¿Por qué no pueden decir abiertamente estos líderes sindicales que están defendiendo a la clase obrera y el derecho de todos los seres humanos a tener un estándar de vida decente?

Después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, los sindicatos y su dirigencia en los EE.UU. quedaron determinados por dos fuerzas poderosas. Primero, la clase dominante capitalista de banqueros y jefes corporativos, junto a sus políticos comprados y pagados, abrieron un ataque político para sacar a la mayoría de los/as socialistas y comunistas de las uniones — uniones que a menudo habían fundado.

En segundo lugar, la posición económica y militar preeminente de los Estados Unidos por todo el mundo condujo a que la misma clase dominante distribuyera algunas migajas a una parte de la clase obrera estadounidense. Entre 1947 a 1972 el estándar medio de vida aumentó un 50 por ciento. Para esos/as trabajadores/as que se beneficiaron de esta subida, los conceptos de la lucha de clase parecían innecesarios.

Las referencias a la "clase obrera" y a la "clase capitalista" desaparecieron de su vocablo. Los/as trabajadores/as ahora se llamaban "empleados/as" o "socios/as". Algunos teóricos avanzaron la idea de que esta ideología estaba muerta, como por ejemplo Daniel Bell en su libro de 1960 "El fin de la ideología".

Aprendiendo de nuevo la lucha de clases

La actual ofensiva de la clase dominante contra los/as trabajadores/as y los sindicatos encuentra a la mayoría de los/as dirigentes sindicales sin entrenamiento en cómo llevar a cabo la lucha de clases. Incluso en los casos cuando sinceramente desean resistir y movilizar a sus fuerzas para batallar, se ven obstaculizados por los conceptos erróneos. Tal vez temen que la clase dominante les ataque por fomentar la "lucha de clases". Quizás también teman que sus propios/as miembros no respondan a un llamado para forjar una lucha combativa de masas, dirigida por la clase trabajadora.

Ciertamente hubo un tiempo en que muchos/as trabajadores/as industriales sindicalizados/as y mejor remunerados/as, miraban sin ninguna simpatía a aquellos/as por debajo de ellos/as en la escala económica. Pero hoy cientos de miles de esos/as mismos/as trabajadores/as han sido despedidos/as. El cierre de fábricas y la exportación de empleos al exterior han diezmado a los sindicatos industriales que anteriormente eran muy poderosos.

Muchos/as trabajadores/as han aceptado recortes salvajes de salarios y beneficios, mientras que a los/as trabajadores/as automotrices recién contratados/as se les paga la mitad de los salarios que reciben los/as trabajadores/as antiguos, en un sistema llamado "de dos niveles". Los/as maestros/as y trabajadores/as del sector público en muchos campos están viendo de primera mano que la clase dominante no respeta su seguridad de empleo o sus derechos.

Ahora es precisamente el momento cuando son necesarias unas consignas claras y correctas para movilizar y educar a los/as millones de trabajadores/as que están entrando en la lucha.



Nueva York, 1 de mayo.

FOTO: JANET MAYES

No podemos volver a la época en que sólo un pequeño porcentaje de los/as trabajadores/as disfrutaban de un "estándar de vida de clase media". No es sólo eso. La clase dominante no lo va a permitir.

Más importante aún es que esa visión reaccionaria deja afuera a la gran mayoría de los/as demás trabajadores/as que no tienen sindicatos.

Deja fuera a los/as desempleados/as y subempleados/as, que ahora suman 30 millones de personas.

Deja fuera a millones de trabajadores/as indocumentados/as y perseguidos/as.

Deja de lado a las personas con discapacidades y personas sin hogar, a las víctimas del racismo, sexism y opresión contra lesbianas, gays, bisexuales y transexuales.

Todos/as ellos/as forman parte de la vasta clase trabajadora de los Estados Unidos. Todos/as ellos/as también están buscando un nivel de vida digno. El llamado a defender o reconstruir la "clase media" sólo puede servir para alienar e insultar a la mayoría de la clase obrera, excluirles de la lucha y debilitar la capacidad de nuestra clase para luchar y triunfar.

Es hora de revivir las consignas de la clase trabajadora

El hecho de que esta consigna tan obviamente errónea fuera adoptada tan rápidamente por la mayoría de destacados dirigentes sindicales de todo el país, hace pensar que la consigna surgió de un debate interno que incluyó algunos "especialistas" de un think-tank (agencia que concibe ideas para luego imponerlas a la sociedad).

La estrecha relación de los sindicatos con el Partido Demócrata y la prevaleciente dependencia de los sindicatos en las elecciones en lugar de en la lucha de masas, hace razonable suponer que los/as dirigentes sindicales están usando esta consigna para realmente atraer — no a sus propios/as miembros — sino a la real clase media.

Dado que una gran parte de los/as trabajadores/as, los/as desempleados/as y la gente más pobre del país no vota la mayor parte del tiempo, y que una parte significativa de la clase media está bajo la influencia del Partido del Té/Republicano, es posible que los/as líderes sindicales crean que con esta consigna pueden persuadirlos/as para que tengan una posición progresista en las próximas elecciones.

Por supuesto que no está mal que la clase trabajadora y sus organizaciones promuevan consignas que apoyen a sectores de la clase media que están sufriendo del ataque económico de los bancos y las corporaciones. Pero solamente una potente lucha por la clase trabajadora que una todos los sectores de la clase trabajadora para exigir empleos, cuidado de salud, vivienda, educación, sueldos sostenibles y pensiones — solamente esta especie de fuerza luchadora — puede atraer y atraerá un sector creciente de la clase media.

Es tiempo de revivir la conciencia de clase trabajadora y la lucha de la clase trabajadora en las calles. Para eso necesitamos consignas de la clase trabajadora.

Sole, miembro del United Auto Workers por los últimos 40 años, fue presidente del Local 2334 del UAW en Detroit.